

Relations industrielles Industrial Relations



Collective Bargaining, Mutuality, and Workers Participation in Management: An International Analysis

Négociation collective, mutualité et participation des travailleurs à la gestion : analyse internationale

Milton Derber

Volume 35, numéro 2, 1980

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/029058ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/029058ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0034-379X (imprimé)

1703-8138 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Derber, M. (1980). Collective Bargaining, Mutuality, and Workers Participation in Management: An International Analysis. *Relations industrielles / Industrial Relations*, 35(2), 187–201. <https://doi.org/10.7202/029058ar>

Résumé de l'article

Les efforts entrepris pour développer la participation des travailleurs à la gestion ont principalement suivi deux voies. L'une, dont la négociation collective est un exemple, implique l'antagonisme; l'autre, représentée par les groupes de travail autonomes, la coopération des producteurs et (dans certaines limites) la cogestion, est de nature mutualiste ou consensuelle. Aux États-Unis et en Grande-Bretagne, c'est le modèle antagoniste que l'on trouve généralement dans les usines et les industries où les salariés sont syndiqués. Dans le système d'autogestion de la Yougoslavie, les kibboutz d'Israël et les coopératives de producteurs d'un certain nombre de pays, c'est le modèle mutualiste qui a été adopté. Mais on a aussi, en République fédérale d'Allemagne, en Suède et au Japon, des exemples de systèmes où les deux méthodes existent côte à côte dans la même industrie ou la même entreprise. Et il existe certaines manières de procéder qui combinent les conceptions antagoniques et mutualistes.

Bien que le système de négociation collective des États-Unis soit fondé sur l'antagonisme, certains employeurs et syndicats ont évolué vers la méthode mutualiste en créant des commissions ou des programmes mixtes de coopération, dont les tâches sont ordinairement bien déterminées. Les résultats de la coopération dans le domaine du rendement de la production, de la réduction des coûts et de la lutte contre le gaspillage ont été minces. Dans la plupart des cas, les expériences faites aux États-Unis en matière d'enrichissement et de valorisation des tâches ainsi qu'avec les groupes de travail semi-autonomes ont eu lieu dans des établissements dont le personnel n'était pas syndiqué. La méthode antagoniste permet théoriquement de régler à peu près tous les problèmes et questions relevant de la méthode mutualiste, mais les syndicats américains se sont bornés à diriger leurs efforts vers l'organisation rigoureuse et la réglementation des questions d'emploi.

L'expérience de la République fédérale d'Allemagne, de la Suède et de quelques autres pays d'Europe montre bien que le champ de la négociation collective peut s'étendre au-delà des questions classiques de salaires et de conditions d'emploi et être, en même temps, lié à des programmes mutualistes au lieu de travail et au conseil de direction. Les objectifs et les attitudes jouent un rôle capital dans ces cas. Il est significatif que le mutualisme soit souvent le résultat de l'action du pouvoir politique ou d'une redistribution de ce pouvoir dans l'ensemble de la société. Mais la volonté a aussi contribué dans une mesure capitale à donner leur physionomie aux relations professionnelles antagonistes et mutualistes.

Tous droits réservés © Département des relations industrielles de l'Université Laval, 1980

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

Érudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

Collective Bargaining, Mutuality, and Workers Participation in Management

An International Analysis

Milton Derber

Since the end of World War II, worker participation in management has expanded in varying degrees, in different forms, and at different levels. In West Europe both collective bargaining and mutualism have expanded dramatically and workers participation in management seems destined to advance. In Britain and North America the adversary system of collective bargaining has predominated. Mutualistic schemes have been in the small minority. The attitudinal climate has not been conducive to consensus thinking in industrial relations.

TWO BASIC APPROACHES

Efforts to advance workers participation in management have taken two main approaches.¹ One, exemplified by collective bargaining, is adversary in nature; the other, as expressed in autonomous work groups, producers' cooperation and (within limits) codetermination, is mutualistic or consensual. The adversary concept, as used here, is not the polar contrast to the mutualistic. It does not denote a struggle in which one of the parties is to be vanquished and eliminated. Nor does it preclude cooperation among the adversaries. Some writers have referred to it as "antagonistic collaboration". It might, more appropriately, be labeled "competitive collaboration". It is analogous to the political systems of most modern democratic societies inasmuch as it recognizes opposing interests over particular issues but assumes agreement on the underlying legislative and

* DERBER, Milton, Professor, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations, University of Illinois.

** Prepared for presentation to the Fifth World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association, Paris, September 1979.

¹ The knowledgeable reader will find little novelty in this dichotomy. Most of the ideas expressed in this introductory section are contained in contemporary writings.

judicial procedures through which conflicts over interests or rights may be peaceably resolved. Although the mutualistic approach is based on the achievement of consensus, it also recognizes individual or group differences. However, it assumes that when issues arise the parties involved will subordinate their differences in a search for a common solution that will maximize the benefits for the total unit.

Let us examine the differences between the two approaches in somewhat more detail.

The collective bargaining approach is premised on the principle of collective organization, that employees and managers will participate in management decision-making through formal organizations, typically a trade union or a management unit. Individuals and informal groups who attempt to deviate from the position of representative organizations are discouraged and, in extreme cases, outlawed. The mutualistic approach, in contrast, emphasizes the role of the individual within the enterprise, acting as a member of a team or family. To the extent that functional roles produce "sides" or opposing interests, it seeks to downplay or soften the groupings and to emphasize individual interests in the whole.

The collective bargaining approach assumes that the collective organizations of employees and managers are independent of each other to the extent that each feels free to advocate and press for opposing interests in the bargaining process. The management-dominated union and the union-intimidated management can hardly engage in genuine collective bargaining. Collective bargaining, historically, has attached considerable importance to the role of "outsiders", particularly on the union side, because the outside link is expected to add appreciable information, expertise, and bargaining power to the local organization. The mutualistic approach de-emphasizes separate and competing groups. It reflects, further, a preference for minimizing the role of "outsiders" in enterprise decision-making. Thus outside union representatives appointed to boards of directors are often expected to divest themselves of union positions and to act as individuals rather than representatives.

The collective bargaining approach attaches great importance to the distribution and exercise of power between unions and management. It is generally assumed that collective bargaining works best when there is an approximate balance of power. If power is disproportionate, it is assumed that the stronger party will restrain its exercise of power to some degree, that is the union will not press for gains beyond the capacity of the enterprise to survive as an economic unit and the employer will not seek to destroy the union as the workers' representative. The mutualistic approach tends to bypass the power concept. It assumes that differences in the decision-making

process will be resolved by discussion, persuasion, and rational judgment rather than pressure. Since the participants share common interests, there is no reason for one group to seek to overpower the others.

The collective bargaining approach accepts overt conflict in the form of strikes and lockouts as a regrettable but often unavoidable last step in the resolution of differences over interests. While alternatives to the work stoppages may be used for certain kinds of issues (e.g., private or public arbitration, labor courts, or a legislative body), the ultimate resort to self-help remains a major component of the system. The mutualistic approach rejects overt conflict. It assumes that all decisions can be made in a peaceful and harmonious way. If conflict breaks out, it is a sign of disorder, of the malfunctioning of the system.

Finally, the collective bargaining approach assumes the continuation of a functional division between "management" and "employees". Although the scope of bargaining has grown over the years, union leaders (with some exceptions) have been reluctant to share responsibility for decision-making in areas that do not directly affect pay, fringe benefits, hours of work, manning, contracting out, and other terms and conditions of employment. Nor have they evidenced a will to assume the roles and functions of management.² In turn, management has emphasized its "right to manage" and has strongly resisted union demands for a greater voice in determining managerial decisions. The mutualistic approach, on the contrary, has encouraged employee participation in decision-making areas that have traditionally been exclusively management, notably productive efficiency, absenteeism and waste, and investment or plant location policies. It has not only added employees to decision-making units but, in some cases, has given employee representatives managerial roles and altered the duties of management positions. Supervisors are no longer "bosses" but group leaders or coordinators or even only advisors.

VARIATIONS IN PATTERNS

These two basic approaches to worker participation in management are often found functioning separately from each other in "pure" terms. In the United States and Britain, and in other systems flowing from them, the adversary model generally prevails in plants and industries where employees are unionized. In the self-management system of Yugoslavia, in the kibbut-

2 This is particularly true in the United States and Canada.

zim of Israel, and in producers cooperatives of a number of countries, the mutualistic model has been adopted. But there are also examples of systems, particularly in the former category, where the two approaches co-exist in the same industry or enterprise. And there are certain behavioral approaches where the adversary and mutualistic concepts are blended. For example, in West Germany collective bargaining occurs mainly outside of the enterprise — at the industry-wide or regional level — while a more or less mutualistic approach applies at the enterprise level. The unions in recent years have become much more active at the plant level but the works councils are chosen by all the employees (non-union as well as union), council members must be employees, and they are prohibited by law from calling a strike. A form of bargaining does occur on a variety of employment conditions and rules, but, absent the right to strike, it is likely to be more discus-sional than adversarial in character. The supervisory boards include outside representatives for workers as well as shareholders but they, reportedly, do not often interact in a collective bargaining manner.

In Japan the bargaining and mutualistic functions appear to be similarly distributed. The basic wage and hour decisions are essentially determined through a militant adversary approach at the national level (the annual Spring “shunto”) although the agreements are reached on an individual enterprise basis. Other employment and management decisions are made within the enterprises through a largely consensual process. As in West Germany, there are some indications that the bargaining approach is assuming more importance in the enterprise, but in comparison with Anglo-American experience, the shift is minor.

In Sweden and Norway the bargaining/mutualism pattern has a somewhat different configuration. Although there is a great deal of consultation and collaboration between management and employee representatives, including employee representation on the company board of directors and a joint plant committee, the dominant rule-making or decision-making process beyond the job level is based on bargaining. The union organization, as distinct from the individual employees, is the focal employee representative and differences between management and labor are resolved through taking “sides”. The recent Swedish law on employee participation in plant decision-making explicitly recognizes management and union interests, but reverses the traditional policy of giving priority to management’s position by letting the union interpretation stand until a labor court has issued an award. At the job level, however, the widespread institution of semi-autonomous work groups has promoted the mutualistic rather than the adversary approach. Decisions about the performance of work are determined in a consensual manner. It is still too early to assess the

Swedish "blend". As the union assumes increasing responsibility for co-determination of managerial policies beyond employment conditions, can the leaders effectively preserve their interest group role or will more adversarial-minded employee representatives arise from below to challenge them? Given the long and impressive record of union-management cooperation in Sweden and the lengthy involvement of Swedish labor leaders in national social and economic planning and implementation, the prospects for success are high. If the mixed pattern does not work effectively, however, it is not likely to do so in other western democratic societies where cultural conditions are much more heterogeneous and attitudes are much less favorable to collaboration.

Although collective bargaining predominates as an adversary system in the United States and Canada, there have been a minority of situations in which the consensual approach has been linked to the bargaining approach. One well-known example is the Scanlon Plan which sets up committees separate from the collective bargaining contract to receive, discuss and evaluate employee suggestions on how to improve productivity and to reduce waste. Cost savings are distributed to all employees on the basis of an agreed-upon formula. Despite the fact that the Scanlon committees are the result of union-management negotiations, they typically function on a consensual basis rather than as an adversary proceeding. Other examples will be discussed below.

In the Israeli kibbutzim and some producers cooperatives it is not uncommon for "hired workers" to be employed side by side with the "owner-workers". The wages and conditions of the "hired workers" may be determined through national collective bargaining while those of the "owner-workers" are determined through local consensual procedures. Although ideologically disturbing, and the subject of lengthy debate within the kibbutz movement, this blend has proved to be operational for a number of decades. Israel also provides examples of union-owned enterprises (e.g., Koor, the large industrial company owned and run by the Histadrut) in which bargaining over employment terms takes place between a union-appointed management board and a union representing the employees of the company.

THE WALTON-McKERSIE ANALYSIS

These mixed patterns suggest the desirability of a brief examination of Walton and McKersie's widely read book, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations* (1965).³ In this work the collective bargaining process is

3 WALTON, R.E., and R.B., McKERSIE, *A Behavioral Theory of Labor Negotiations; An Analysis of a Social Interaction System*. New-York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc, 1965, 437 pp.

analyzed in terms of four-processes two of which contain a number of the characteristics that I have included in the bargaining and mutualistic approaches. One sub-process, which they call distributive bargaining, is essentially adversary in nature. They describe it in game-theory terms as a fixed-sum game in which the gains of one side represent a loss to the other. Distributive bargaining occurs principally over pay issues although it can apply to all the other issues in collective agreements. A second sub-process, integrative bargaining, is problem-rather than issue-oriented; it is described as a variable-sum game in which both parties can achieve gains. Hence it is mutualistic in spirit rather than adversary. According to Walton and McKersie this type of negotiations applies mainly to non-money subjects, particularly matters of job security.

In practice, Walton and McKersie observe, the bargaining agenda is often comprised of mixed items. The mixed agenda has both distributive and integrative potential and its outcome will depend upon "the orientation of the negotiators and their tactical approach to the agenda item".⁴ Since the two "pure" sub-processes generally conflict, the negotiators find themselves in repeated dilemmas in bargaining over a mixed agenda. The consequence is that each party seeks to obtain a "decent share" while preventing the other party from gaining "the lion's share of the game".⁵

The significant feature of their analysis when applied to the subject of worker participation in management is that it assumes a continuing division of interests between management and the employees, the existence of "sides", a concern over power. Even the integrative sub-process is defined in terms of the gains to be achieved by each side rather than commonality of interest. The underlying relationship patterns which Walton and McKersie introduced in their other two sub-processes (the attitudinal structuring model and the intraorganizational bargaining model) lend further support to this interpretation. Cooperation between management and unions within a collective bargaining framework is seen to be different than mutualism.

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

In turn now to a more detailed analysis of the American system of collective bargaining. Collective bargaining in the United States has functioned for the most part as an adversary system both in regard to the establishment

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 128. See pp. 161-183 for their detailed discussion.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 183.

of the principal rules (embodied in highly detailed contracts) and the grievance procedure for the interpretation and implementation of the contractual provisions. Although many managements and unions have conducted their mutual affairs within a climate of trust and friendliness, they have been careful to assert and maintain their separate identities. The parties have moved on a relatively limited scale in a mutualistic direction through the establishment of joint labor-management cooperation committees or programs, designed usually for special purposes. Perhaps the earliest of these dealt with apprenticeship training in the building trades. More recently joint programs have been developed to deal with health and safety, including problems of alcoholism and drug abuse, with community charitable drives, energy saving, equal employment opportunity for minorities and women, the administration of retirement and other benefit funds, and recreational activities. In industries that have had difficulty in competing successfully with foreign companies (pottery and dresses, as examples) or with alternative domestic industries (e.g., glass or railroads) unions and employers have cooperated in lobbying for protective laws or regulations or in developing advertising and promotional campaigns.

The record of cooperation in the areas of productive efficiency, cost reduction, and the elimination of waste has been slight. A study by the now defunct National Commission on Productivity and Work Quality in 1975 concluded that although "There is nothing in the American System of industrial relations that precludes the use of joint labor-management committees to increase productivity," they "have made comparatively little progress" over half a century.⁶ Prior to World War II the principal examples were found in railroads, textiles, clothing, and the Tennessee Valley Authority (a governmental agency for electric power, flood control and related functions). During the War several thousand joint labor-management productivity plant committees were established with Government backing and guidance and many yielded fairly good results, but virtually all of these committees disappeared after the War ended.

Since the War several notable examples of cooperation have occurred in such diverse industries as meatpacking, steel, and longshore. The first (the Armour Automation Committee), involving the shutdown and relocation of a dozen obsolete plants, provided workers with relocation seniority rights, moving expenses, and retraining opportunities. A second was the Human Relations Committee set up by the United Steelworkers of America

6 *Labor-Management Productivity Committees in American Industry*, May 1975, 43 pp.

and the major steel companies after a costly 116-day strike in 1959 to conduct studies and build up mutual understanding of complex problems involving wage incentives, seniority, medical care, and job classifications. A third example was the so-called mechanization and modernization agreement for the West Coast longshore industry in which restrictive or outdated work rules were given up by the union in return for substantial income and employment guarantees. Other cases include the Scalco Plans, referred to earlier, but these have been confined to a few hundred enterprises, mostly employing under 500 employees. A recent survey in an Illinois city of 150,000 population revealed 5 unionized enterprises with joint productivity committees, 3 with waste reduction programs and 7 with plans to reduce absenteeism or turnover.

In 1970 the federal government launched a national campaign to increase productivity through labor-management cooperation committees, linking to productivity the idea of improvement in the quality of working life as an incentive for union cooperation. However, American unions have traditionally regarded the increase of productivity as a function and responsibility of management; as a rule they have become actively involved in productivity increase programs only to protect threatened job interests, particularly where an enterprise or industry is facing extinction. Productivity bargaining has been limited, and typically has involved a trade-off between restrictive union work rules and economic benefits for the employees. A number of promising programs were developed, including a community-wide effort in the then depressed city of Jamestown, New York; an industry-wide plant-level program in basic steel; national joint committees in the retail food and trucking industries, and a variety of enterprise projects in coal mining, auto manufacture, and fabricated metal companies. But recently several of these undertakings have been abandoned and the impetus for new programs appears to have diminished.

It is interesting to note that most of the American experimentation with job enlargement and enrichment and with semi-autonomous work groups has taken place on the initiative of management in non-unionized establishments or with non-union employee groups in otherwise unionized enterprises. The development on a small scale of self-management establishments has also occurred outside of the collective bargaining orbit.

Why has the American collective bargaining system produced so few programs of a mutualistic or quasi mutualistic nature? The National Commission on Productivity and Work Quality study concluded⁷ that the

⁷ Op. cit., p. 44.

answer lies in two main facts: (1) the adversary system has worked "reasonably well, and in most situations the parties, through mutual accommodation, are able to achieve satisfactory relations"; (2) "differences of interest between management and union officials and sometimes between the latter and their rank and file."

It is important to note that the adversary approach is theoretically capable of dealing with virtually all of the issues and problems that are dealt with by the mutualistic approach. Although the unions have tended to confine their efforts to the control or regulation of job-related matters, they have gradually widened their conception of what is job-related, including sub-contracting and the consequences of plant relocation decisions. Professional and quasi-professional unions, like teachers and social workers, have contended that collective bargaining encompasses the entire scope of their professional lives.

Perhaps the chief restraint on the scope of collective bargaining arises from role differences. Basically they center on either (1) the reluctance of proprietary or professional management groups to share their decision functions with workers or unions or (2) the unwillingness of union leaders to risk their leadership role by participating in a management structure which might produce decisions to which the rank and file might object.

Other factors inhibiting mutuality in the current period have been the skepticism of the Carter Administration regarding the workability of the joint committee approach in the productivity area and, more importantly, the widening gap between organized labor and big business as a result of the bitter struggle during the past few years, over the unions' proposed revisions of the basic labor law. The defeat of the labor law reform campaign, the minimal success of labor in achieving other legislative goals, and the frustrations of the unions in their Southern organizing campaigns have produced a climate that is not conducive to union-management cooperation. The recession of the mid-seventies and the persistence of high levels of unemployment have also discouraged union participation in productivity programs that might reduce job opportunities for their members and, in any event, might have dislocating effect.

EXPERIENCE WITH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN OTHER COUNTRIES

In Britain, Canada, and Australia, the adversary approach has generally predominated as in the U.S. and cooperative or mutualistic programs have been the exception. Both in Britain and Canada the wartime joint production consultative and advisory committees programs were continued

after the war (in contrast to the American) but despite some interesting success stories, the general impetus gradually faded away and joint consultation was supplanted by the adversary climate of shop stewardism and collective bargaining. Joint committees of any kind have been rare in Australia's private sector although an industrial democracy movement, mainly implemented in public agencies was initiated by the Government of South Australia in the mid-1970's and a small number of private firms were persuaded to experiment with consultative committees, job or work redesign, and semi-autonomous work groups.

As noted above, the experience of several west and central European countries, particularly West Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden has differed significantly from the Anglo-American experience. Very strong collective bargaining systems, operating on adversary principles, have expanded the scope of union participation in the determination of employment conditions, including subjects that traditionally have been regarded as exclusively in the managerial domain, such as plant shutdowns and relocation. This expansion has been mainly the result of increased union involvement in the affairs of establishments in contrast to prior concentration on industry and area bargaining. It has been encouraged in some cases by legislative enactment. Concurrently programs of a mutualistic or consensual character, such as worker directors and works councils, have grown, mainly through the adoption of legislation and, somewhat ironically, often despite strong employer resistance.

How does one explain the difference between the two sets of industrial relations systems? In part they seem to be a function of relative union and management power in the society as a whole. Codetermination came into effect in the coal and steel industries of West Germany as a substitute for nationalization in an effort to prevent certain German employers from reviving their former Nazi ties or developing similar relationships in the future. The continuing opposition of many German employers to the 1976 Codetermination act is indicative that the mutualistic approach does not come only from voluntarism but may be imposed by the exercise of political power. In Sweden much of the recent expansion in worker participation in management at plant-level has likewise come about through the exercise of political rather than bargaining power. The fate of the Meidner Plan and similar employee share ownership ideas, which are ultimately mutualistic in philosophy, will also be determined in the political arena.

On the other hand, the extensive Scandinavian programs in semi-autonomous work groups and work redesign have been the product of voluntaristic labor-management cooperation. A shared perception of

underlying problems (e.g., excess absenteeism, labor turnover, and worker dissatisfaction with their jobs) combined with a joint willingness to experiment with the redesign of the workplace and the decision-making process on work performance appear to have generated these mutualistic programs.

Why the shared perceptions and willingness to experiment with respect to these problems have emerged on such a large scale in Scandinavia and on such a limited scale in North America is an intriguing question that appears to take us into an intricate network of historical, social, and political phenomena.

In the United States and Canada unionism is a minority, although powerful, institution whose spread evokes strong resistance from numerous employers. Many white collar employees retain negative attitudes towards collective bargaining and they represent a growing proportion of the labor force. Employers have become increasingly sophisticated in the development of personnel programs designed to win employee allegiance and to improve employee morale. The labor force is fragmented along ethnic, racial, educational, and sexual lines, and class consciousness or cohesion is weak. As a result of these and other factors, the unions are on the defensive and neither they nor the great body of employers are disposed toward a collaborative or mutualistic approach. In the political arena, power is sufficiently distributed so that legislative changes desired by either side are difficult to enact.

In Scandinavia, on the other hand, unionization and collective bargaining are virtually all-encompassing, unions and managements have collaborated on a harmonious basis since the late 1930's, and labor's political influence is very great. A relatively small homogeneous population and a common body of social and economic values have also contributed to a climate of mutualism.

The conclusion to be drawn from this very brief analysis is that, because of its inherently adversary nature collective bargaining in private enterprise systems can lead to or function concurrently with mutualistic programs at various enterprise levels only if supported by a sufficient supply of political as well as economic power and, particularly, if motivated by a shared set of beliefs and values among the management and union parties. Where the values are not shared and significant power is held by a group hostile to the idea of mutuality, the adversary system will prevail.

In any event, the collective bargaining approach is inherently self-limiting in terms of worker participation in management because the resistance of managers will usually increase as traditional managerial functions are invaded and because as union leaders assume more respon-

sibilities, intra-party dilemmas and conflicts are created that endanger the organizational position of union leaders and even the survival of the organization. This does not preclude a widening of the scope of collective bargaining, especially where job interests are involved. Europe provides many examples and North America a smaller but growing number of union actions to codetermine the shutdown or relocation of a plant or major division. Usually the involvement in the American cases comes after the main decision has been made and the parties deal jointly with the consequences of the move for the employees. But there is a mounting union concern with an earlier involvement in the decision process, especially in smaller communities with limited alternative job opportunities.

THE PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

Before concluding this discussion a brief note on the public sector seems fitting. The question of collective bargaining and worker participation in public management would appear on the surface to be different from that in the private sector. For one thing private ownership interests are not involved and profitability is not ordinarily a test of performance. Market forces affect the supply and cost of labor but not the price of most governmental services. Political factors play a major role in determining who fills the management role and how decisions are made. Given these conditions one might expect a much higher level of mutualism in the public sector than in the private sector and a lower level of adversary relations. The recent experience of most of the countries previously referred to does not support this expectation. It is true that for decades the Whitley Council system gave British public agencies a mutualistic aura not shared by the private sector. However during the turbulent economic period following World War II, nationalized industry (coal, transport, steel, etc.) has been the scene of militant collective bargaining and other parts of the public sector (education, firefighting, police) have reflected a similar pattern. In Scandinavia and Japan the adversary approach has, if anything, been more prevalent than the mutualistic in the public sector. And in North America the single most dramatic development of the past decade has been the rise of militant public sector unionism and collective bargaining.

What can we infer from this experience? It reaffirms the proposition noted by other writers that public ownership *per se* (as distinct from employee ownership) has little bearing on the issue of worker participation in management. To protect their job interests workers turn to unions and comparable associations in public employment as they do in private employment. Similarly public management shares many of the attitudes of

private management in carrying out managerial responsibilities and in interacting with employees. Where mutualistic approaches have been adopted in the public service, they can usually be traced to the ideology of an individual or group, much as in the case of the private sector. The effectiveness of such approaches appears not to differ in any noticeable way.

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Since the end of World War II, worker participation in management has expanded in varying degrees, in different forms, and at different levels. In West Europe both collective bargaining and mutualism have expanded dramatically and workers participation in management seems destined to advance. In Britain and North America the adversary system of collective bargaining has predominated. Mutualistic schemes have been in the small minority. The attitudinal climate has not been conducive to consensus thinking in industrial relations. Currently, if anything, the conditions for mutualism in the Anglo-American world are less favorable than they were two decades ago. But there are pressures for change emanating from the changing character of the labor force, new psychological concepts among professional management, and persistingly serious national economic problems of unemployment, productivity, inflation, and foreign trade. These could conceivably change attitudes and standards. I do not expect any quantum jumps in the foreseeable future because collective bargaining seems to be a self-limiting process in respect to decision-making.

A central question remains: how much involvement in the management process can union leaders achieve and maintain in a collective bargaining system without radically transforming the character of the system. In the United States during the third of a century since the end of World War II, the scope of union influence on management decisions at establishment level has grown only slightly. The principal areas of increased union involvement has been the so-called fringe benefits or supplemental wage payments (such as private retirement and health and welfare plans), contracting out of work, and occupational health and safety. In general unions have not attempted to influence management decisions on production engineering, plant location, what products to produce, investment policy, sales, prices and other non-personnel matters. In some of the West European countries, particularly Sweden and West Germany, union participation in management decision-making has been more broadly conceived. Management is expected to supply employee representatives with information on virtually every aspect of the enterprise and to consult, if not actually bargain, with union officials on a wide array of production and investment

decisions. Because this wider approach to collective bargaining is quite recent, the ultimate consequences for the labor organizations are uncertain. That the American concept of worker participation in management is more limited than its potential seems to be indicated by European experience. That broader European concepts may fall short of realization without a shift from collective bargaining to a more mutualistic system based on a radical transformation of industrial government also seems indicated. How far the concepts of workers directors and employee stock ownership are carried appears to depend on the distribution of political power and the enactment of facilitating legislation. How far the concepts of autonomous work groups and self-management are carried appears to depend on local management and union initiatives.

Négociation collective, mutualité et participation des travailleurs à la gestion: analyse internationale

Les efforts entrepris pour développer la participation des travailleurs à la gestion ont principalement suivi deux voies. L'une, dont la négociation collective est un exemple, implique l'antagonisme; l'autre, représentée par les groupes de travail autonomes, la coopération des producteurs et (dans certaines limites) la cogestion, est de nature mutualiste ou consensuelle. Aux États-Unis et en Grande-Bretagne, c'est le modèle antagoniste que l'on trouve généralement dans les usines et les industries où les salariés sont syndiqués. Dans le système d'autogestion de la Yougoslavie, les kibboutz d'Israël et les coopératives de producteurs d'un certain nombre de pays, c'est le modèle mutualiste qui a été adopté. Mais on a aussi, en République fédérale d'Allemagne, en Suède et au Japon, des exemples de systèmes où les deux méthodes existent côte à côte dans la même industrie ou la même entreprise. Et il existe certaines manières de procéder qui combinent les conceptions antagoniques et mutualistes.

Bien que le système de négociation collective des États-Unis soit fondé sur l'antagonisme, certains employeurs et syndicats ont évolué vers la méthode mutualiste en créant des commissions ou des programmes mixtes de coopération, dont les tâches sont ordinairement bien déterminées. Les résultats de la coopération dans le domaine du rendement de la production, de la réduction des coûts et de la lutte contre le gaspillage ont été minces. Dans la plupart des cas, les expériences faites aux États-Unis en matière d'enrichissement et de valorisation des tâches ainsi qu'avec les groupes de travail semi-autonomes ont eu lieu dans des établissements dont le personnel n'était pas syndiqué. La méthode antagoniste permet théoriquement de régler à peu près tous les problèmes et questions relevant de la méthode mutualiste, mais les syndicats américains se sont bornés à diriger leurs efforts vers l'organisation rigoureuse et la réglementation des questions d'emploi.

L'expérience de la République fédérale d'Allemagne, de la Suède et de quelques autres pays d'Europe montre bien que le champ de la négociation collective peut

s'étendre au-delà des questions classiques de salaires et de conditions d'emploi et être, en même temps, lié à des programmes mutualistes au lieu de travail et au conseil de direction. Les objectifs et les attitudes jouent un rôle capital dans ces cas. Il est significatif que le mutualisme soit souvent le résultat de l'action du pouvoir politique ou d'une redistribution de ce pouvoir dans l'ensemble de la société. Mais la volonté a aussi contribué dans une mesure capitale à donner leur physionomie aux relations professionnelles antagonistes et mutualistes.

**INDEX ANALYTIQUE
CUMULATIVE INDEX**

**RELATIONS INDUSTRIELLES
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

**Volume 1 — Volume 25
(1945-1970)**

**Rapport des — Proceedings of
CONGRÈS DES RELATIONS INDUSTRIELLES
(1946-1970)**

Avant-propos — Forewords; A— Index alphabétique — Subject Index; B-1 Index méthodique — Broad Subject Headings Index; Liste des descripteurs génériques — List of generic keywords; B-2 Index méthodique des titres — Broad Subject Heading Index of Titles; C— Index méthodique des ouvrages recensés — Broad Authors of Book Reviews; E— Auteurs des articles et des recensions — Authors of the Articles and Book Reviews; F— Références bibliographiques — Bibliographical References.

**Un volume 6 x 9, relié, 360 pages
prix : \$ 10.00**

En vente chez votre libraire ou chez l'éditeur

**LES PRESSES DE L'UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL
CITÉ UNIVERSITAIRE
Québec, P.Q., CANADA
G1K 7R4**